

This Week in Congress

June 26, 2006

Dear Friend,

Welcome to "This Week in Congress." I hope you find this newsletter useful.

House Passes Resolution Commending Kansas-Originated Patriot Guard Riders

The House of Representatives this week unanimously passed a resolution I introduced to commend Patriot Guard Riders for shielding military families from protesters at funerals. The resolution expresses the House's deepest appreciation to this nationwide group of volunteers who protect mourning families and preserve the memory of our nation's fallen heroes.

The movement began in 2005 when American Legion Riders from Mulvane, Kansas, responded to protesters disrupting funerals of service members. Calling themselves the "Patriot Guard" and appearing at the request of families, these Kansas motorcycle riders organized supporters to peacefully wave American flags and serve as a barrier between families and picketers. This movement led to the formation of a nationwide network of tens of thousands of members - including veterans and non-veterans, riders and non-riders - known as the "Patriot Guard Riders."

This resolution tells the positive side of an ugly story. Kansans first took action against protestors at funerals, and now thousands of volunteers from across the country are working to preserve the dignity of military services and allow families and friends the peaceful time of mourning they deserve. I am proud to recognize the courage and compassion of these patriots.

For the full text of a speech I gave to the House in support of this resolution, visit: http://www.house.gov/list/speech/ks01_moran/sp062006CommendingPatriotGuardRiders.html

U.S., Japanese Officials Determine Final Measures to Resume Beef Imports

U.S. and Japanese officials this week announced an outline of measures to be taken to resume imports of U.S. beef products to Japan. After a brief reopening of its market, Japan again closed the door to U.S. beef products when ineligible veal was discovered in a January shipment from New York. Although the agreement reached between the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the Japanese government sets forth a framework with which to resume exports, the agreement has not defined any solid timeline.

Prior to the announcement, other Members of the House Agriculture Committee and I requested a meeting with Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi when he visits the U.S. later this month. A face-to-face meeting will allow us to convey how the closure of the border affects our farmers and ranchers. We have gone above and beyond to ensure the safety of the American cattle supply - from the ranch to the packing and shipping of products. The Japanese must quit dragging their feet and resolve this issue once and for all.

Free Credit Monitoring Available for Veterans Affected by Data Theft

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) announced this week that veterans affected by the recent theft of personal information will receive one year of free credit monitoring. This service should be available by mid-August, at which time eligible veterans will receive a letter explaining credit monitoring and how to enroll should they choose to use the service.

Free credit monitoring will help ease the concerns of Kansas veterans about losses from

identify fraud. This is a step in the right direction, and more needs to be done to protect veterans and ensure this does not happen again. I will continue to be involved in House Veterans Affairs Committee hearings in the coming weeks to investigate and reform information security management at the VA.

House Approves Line-Item Veto Legislation to Remove Wasteful Spending

The House approved the Legislative Line-Item Veto Act on Thursday, legislation I sponsored to give the President and Congress an additional tool to eliminate wasteful spending. The legislative line-item veto would grant the President the authority to target and remove pork-barrel spending items and special-interest tax breaks that are part of larger pieces of legislation passed by Congress. Once these spending items are separated, Congress would be required to vote whether to keep or remove them based on their own merits. Money saved will go toward reducing the deficit. The legislative line-item veto will help eliminate unnecessary earmarks and pet projects, deter Members of Congress from making these requests to begin with, and ensure American taxpayers' dollars are spent more wisely.

Addressing Concerns about Iran

Congress must have a say in any potential prolonged military operations overseas. On Tuesday, I voted in favor of an amendment to the Department of Defense funding bill that would prevent any military action against Iran unless it is in accordance with Article I, Section 8 of the

Constitution. This section of the Constitution defines the specific powers of Congress, including the power to declare war. The President does have the power as Commander in Chief to respond to any sudden attacks against the United States. However, any offensive action should be approved by Congress. Unfortunately, the amendment failed the by a vote of House 158 to 262.

Iran's desire to posses enriched weapons grade uranium is a threat to global security and must be addressed. The U.S. has joined a coalition of countries in proposing a package of economic and technical incentives to Iran in order to stop their nuclear weapons program. I am hopeful that Iran will accept this diplomatic plan.

Introducing Resolution to Honor the Community of Nicodemus

This week, I introduced a resolution to honor the community of Nicodemus, Kansas. Nicodemus was established in 1877 by six African-American men as a community specifically for African-Americans. In a time in which prejudice and oppression were unfortunately still common, Nicodemus and other all black communities offered African-Americans an oppportunity to own their own land, make a living farming, and prosper in a jurisdiction self-governed by African Americans. After the Civil War, many freed slaves moved from the South and settled in all black towns such as Nicodemus. Today, Nicodemus remains a community of African-Americans and is the only surviving Western town that was established by African-Americans during the Reconstruction Period.

In 1996, Congress recognized the historical significance of Nicodemus by establishing the Nicodemus National Historic Site to preserve, protect and interpret this unique community for generations to come. The resolution I introduced honors Nicodemus for its contributions to American history and commends and encourages the preservation efforts by the National Park Service and the residents of Nicodemus on the tenth anniversary of its establishment as a National Historic Site.

Congressman John Lewis of Georgia joined me in support of this resolution as the lead Democrat cosponsor. Congressman Lewis was an influential leader in the Civil Rights Movement and I am glad to have his support. Fifty other representatives have also cosponsored this resolution, including Congressmen Tiahrt, Ryun and Moore of the Kansas delegation.

Following the Law on Domestic Surveillance

On Tuesday, I voted in favor of an amendment to Department of Defense (DoD) funding legislation that would have prohibited the National Security Administration and other DoD agencies from any electronic surveillance in the United States without a warrant issued by a judge. However, this amendment failed the House by a dozen votes.

Though surveillance of terrorists seeking to do harm on our country is critical, it must not invade upon our civil liberties. The Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act provides these agencies with a discreet, legal avenue they can use to conduct surveillance on suspected

terrorists within our borders. If these laws need to be updated or changed to help meet the new challenges in the war on terrorism, these agencies should come to Congress and request the changes.

Aviation Hearing Addresses Air Traffic Control System and Increased Passengers

The Transportation Subcommittee on Aviation held a hearing this week to review the current status of the effort to modernize our air traffic control system. The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) operates the largest and safest air traffic control system in the world and handles almost half of the world's air traffic activities. In order to fulfill its duties, the FAA relies on the extensive use of various technologies and a large network of radars, navigation equipment, and air traffic control facilities.

By 2015, domestic passenger traffic is expected to double to nearly one billion passengers annually. The Subcommittee heard from numerous government and industry officials on efforts to address the growth in air traffic. If the demand for air transportation continues to be greater than the federal government's ability to increase its capacity, consumers could lose up to \$30 billion annually through 2025 due to people and goods not reaching their destination within the time periods we expect today.

Meeting with Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia

I had the opportunity to meet with Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia this week to discuss his role on the Court and various aspects of the judicial system. I was happy to hear about his Kansas experiences, including a visit to the University of Kansas School of Law and a hunting trip to Ringneck Ranch in Tipton.

Discussing Railroad Needs of Kansas with New President of Union Pacific

This week, I met with the new President and CEO of Union Pacific Railroad, Jim Young. We discussed the economic viability of railroads and the need for more investment in infrastructure. Railroads are a vital transportation link in Kansas and greatly affect the ability of farmers to get their products to market. We also talked about the need to provide service to the many ethanol plants being constructed in Kansas.

Community of Chapman Prepares for Arrival of the Big Red One at Fort Riley

On my way back to Washington, D.C., I made stops in Chapman on Monday to visit local

businesses and talk to community members. I met with residents at Alida Pearl Co-op, First National Bank, Londeen Hardware and Furniture, Casey's Convenience Store, the USD 473 office, City Hall and the senior center for discussions about many current issues, including wheat harvest and opportunities for the community with the expansion of Fort Riley.

The return of the Big Red One to Fort Riley means big things for surrounding communities like Chapman. More than a dozen new homes have been built and more are planned in the future. I commend the people of Chapman for coming together to plan and prepare for the arrival of soldiers and their families.

Kansas Wesleyan University Breaks Ground on New Student Activity Center

Kansas Wesleyan University (KWU) raised funds to begin construction of a \$9.8 million student activity center. On Friday, I was in Salina to see the Board of Trustees and KWU leadership break ground for the new facility. I enjoyed joining President Philip Kerstetter and Student Body President Jamie Winter for the ceremony. This building project will give students at KWU an even greater sense of community by providing more on-campus facilities for students. Plans for the facility include student-related offices, meeting rooms, the campus bookstore, a snack bar, game room, and email centers. I commend the community of Salina for their support of this addition to the campus of Kansas Wesleyan.

Visiting the Headquarters of Keim Trucking in Sabetha

On Friday morning, I had the opportunity to tour the Keim Trucking headquarters in Sabetha with Donna Keim, Randy Hoffman and Paul Herl. Keim Trucking is a large flat bed trucking company with three locations in the Midwest. I enjoyed seeing some of their impressive fleet and meeting the people who make their system work. Keim Trucking utilizes about 200 trucks to help Kansas manufacturers and farmers get their products to the marketplace.

Viewing Expanding Facilities of the Landoll Corporation in Marysville

Don Landoll and the staff at the Landoll Corporation were kind enough to give me and other Marysville community leaders a tour of their expanding facilities on Friday. The employees of this growing company help to supply our military with needed trailers and wreckers. The House was able to honor a request by the Army Reserves for funding for these products in the Department of Defense appropriations bill passed this week. These military contracts represent only a segment of this company's current manufacturing. Landoll's product line also includes agriculture and material handling equipment. Many of these products are exported, bringing foreign money into this Kansas community.

G.L. Huyett Nears 100 Year Anniversary - Spending Time at Minneapolis Facility

G.L. Huyett has been around for 100 years and, after touring their Minneapolis facility on Friday, I can understand how they have continued to prosper for the last century. Joining me for the tour given by Ken Stout, Debbie Andrews and McCabe O'Neal of G.L. Huyett, were Mayor Bob Hudson and Development Corporation Director Mark Freel. G.L. Huyett is a manufacturer and distributor of industrial fasteners. Their stress for quality and speedy distribution has led to recent growth and a continued need for expansion. Their upcoming 100 year anniversary on August 12 will be an opportunity to celebrate this company's importance to the community of Minneapolis.

In the Office

Brian Dechant of Hutchinson was in the office this week with the American Association for Homecare to emphasize how important durable medical equipment, homecare, and oxygen therapy are to Medicare beneficiaries. In from Kansas State University were Dr. Jim Stack and Will Baldwin of Manhattan to describe the National Plant Diagnostic Network's current efforts and future plans to help secure the nation's agriculture resources.

Members of the Kansas Bankers Association were in Washington, D.C., this week for their annual conference and came by to inform me about the need for regulatory relief and request help in opposing USDA's plan to impose fee increases on Farm Service Agency guaranteed loans. In with the group were Mark Berkley of Tescott, Kirk Bradford of Marysville, Mike Fahrbach of Haven, Barney Horton of Atwood, Don Lackamp of Great Bend, Larry McCants of Goodland, Earl McVicker of Hutchinson, Dick Nichols of McPherson, Kathy Olsen and Doug Wareham of Topeka, Reed Peters of Larned, Mike Stevens of Sublette, and Ken Stout of Woodbine.

Dennis Hupe of Topeka, Harold Kraus of Hays and Miranda Brown of Republic were in with the Kansas Soybean Commission to discuss issues impacting the biodiesel industry, including extension of the biodiesel tax credit and recent industry efforts regarding quality assurance. Judi O'Grady of Eudora was in with Cure Search to talk about the importance of childhood cancer research and the need for a childhood cancer database. This week, the House of Representatives passed a resolution supporting efforts to increase childhood cancer awareness, treatment and research.

Several people were in my office this week for a tour of the United States Capitol, including Gilbert and Nancy Richard of Neodesha, John and Anne Martin of Hoisington, James Redick of Cottonwood Falls, and Guillermo Cintron of Emporia with his children, Taliyah, Talecia and Tamisha. Anna Liu, a visiting Fort Hays State University professor from China, was in, as was Jean Popelka of Munden with her sisters, Mary Hawel of Hays and Judith Meyer of Texas. Ron and Donna Ruder, formerly of Hays, also came by with their children, Marissa, Lindsay and Bryanne.

Very truly yours,

Jerry